

By: Branch

H.R. No. 108

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The death of Norman Brinker of Dallas on June 9,
2 2009, at the age of 78, has deeply saddened the family and many
3 friends of this restaurant industry icon and civic leader; and

4 WHEREAS, A native of Denver, Mr. Brinker was born to Kathryn
5 and Eugene Brinker on June 3, 1931; he grew up on a farm in Roswell,
6 New Mexico, where he demonstrated his entrepreneurial spirit at an
7 early age, raising rabbits and delivering newspapers; he paid his
8 own tuition at the New Mexico Military Institute and went on to
9 serve his country in the United States Navy for two years; during
10 that time, he was selected by the 1952 U.S. Olympic Equestrian Team
11 and competed in the 1954 Modern Pentathlon World Championships in
12 Budapest, Hungary; he married the tennis legend Maureen "Little Mo"
13 Connolly in June 1955 and they shared 14 years together before her
14 untimely passing; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Brinker earned a bachelor's degree in marketing
16 from San Diego State University in 1957 and joined Jack-in-the-Box,
17 eventually becoming a major partner and helping it expand from five
18 locations into a national chain; after moving to Dallas in 1964, he
19 opened his first restaurant, Brink's Coffee Shop, and two years
20 later launched Steak & Ale, the restaurant that popularized the
21 salad bar concept; by the time the company went public in 1971, the
22 chain had grown to more than 100 restaurants; when it merged with
23 the Pillsbury Restaurant Group, Mr. Brinker became an executive
24 vice president and board member of that company and created the

1 Bennigan's Tavern concept, launching the "fern bar" trend; and

2 WHEREAS, In 1983, Mr. Brinker recognized the potential in
3 Chili's, Inc., a small restaurant company; building the parent
4 company up in his role as chief executive officer and board chair,
5 he took it public the next year; changing its name to Brinker
6 International in 1990, the company became a restaurant giant that
7 set standards for the casual dining industry; today, Brinker
8 International owns more than 1,700 restaurants and employs more
9 than 125,000 people in 27 countries and two territories through its
10 three chains, Chili's Grill & Bar, Maggiano's Little Italy, and On
11 the Border Mexican Grill & Cantina; it also holds a stake in
12 Romano's Macaroni Grill; Mr. Brinker retired in 2001, but he
13 remained active as chair emeritus; and

14 WHEREAS, Throughout his remarkable career, Mr. Brinker
15 exerted tremendous influence on the dining industry through his
16 mentorship of young restaurateurs; a role model and mentor to
17 innumerable people, he impressed on each employee his philosophy of
18 customer service by treating everyone with respect and
19 consideration and taking every opportunity to make others feel
20 special; many major restaurant companies can count Brinker alumni
21 among their past and present leadership, and his myriad protégés
22 included the founders of Outback Steakhouse and Houston's; leaders
23 in other industries from real estate to finance also count him as an
24 inspiration; and

25 WHEREAS, This influential entrepreneur gave generously of
26 his time, talent, and financial resources to a wide variety of civic
27 and charitable organizations; a longtime member of the Young

1 Presidents' Organization and the World Presidents' Organization, he
2 provided guidance and funding to assist his former wife, Nancy
3 Brinker, in establishing Susan G. Komen for the Cure and continued
4 to serve as an advisor; he joined with his wife, Toni Brinker, to
5 help found the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts and to organize
6 and support the Brinker International Forum; the couple also
7 supported such organizations as the Salvation Army and the Ruth
8 Sharp Altshuler Circle of the Alexis de Tocqueville Society of
9 United Way of Metropolitan Dallas; and

10 WHEREAS, Having brought his favorite sport to North Texas
11 with the opening of the Willow Bend Polo & Hunt Club in 1972,
12 Mr. Brinker won the United States Polo Association Gold Cup and the
13 U.S. Open polo competition and continued to support American polo
14 through the years, serving as chair of the United States Polo
15 Association and winning membership in the Polo Hall of Fame; his
16 numerous accolades included the Horatio Alger Award, the Elliot
17 Mentor Award from the Elliot Leadership Conference, the Augie Award
18 from the Culinary Institute of America, and membership in the
19 Culinary Institute of America Hall of Fame; he won both the Pioneer
20 Award and the Operator of the Year Award from *Nation's Restaurant*
21 *News* and was named Entrepreneur of the Year by Southern Methodist
22 University; in May 2009, he accepted the prestigious Robert
23 S. Folsom Leadership Award from the Methodist Health System
24 Foundation in Dallas; and

25 WHEREAS, Norman Brinker not only left an indelible mark on
26 the restaurant industry, but he made a positive impact in countless
27 lives through both his professional leadership and his personal

1 example of generosity, integrity, and compassion; although he will
2 be profoundly missed, this extraordinary Texan will long be
3 remembered with the greatest affection and admiration by all who
4 were privileged to know him; now, therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
6 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the life of
7 Norman Brinker and extend sincere sympathy to the members of his
8 family: to his devoted wife, Toni Brinker; to his daughters, Cindy
9 Brinker Simmons, Brenda Brinker Bottum and her husband, Steve, and
10 Christina Brinker-Aschtgen and her husband, Chad; to his sons, Eric
11 Brinker, Mark Brinker, and Bryan Clark and his wife, Kristin; to his
12 six grandchildren, William Simmons, Connor Bottum, Connolly
13 Bottum, Caleb Brinker-Aschtgen, Emma Brinker-Aschtgen, and Devin
14 Clark; to his cousin, Barbara Brock; and to his other relatives and
15 host of friends; and, be it further

16 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
17 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
18 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Norman
19 Brinker.